

GAS BURNING INSERT BUYERS GUIDE

What is the difference between a Fireplace and an Insert?



Fireplace



Insert

When you think of a fireplace, you think of an opening (keyword open) in the wall with a flue above it to remove/vent the smoke. Some fireplaces have glass doors on the front, or a screen making it look closed. Basically, a fireplace is either built one of two ways: masonry or factory built. Masonry fireplaces are constructed by builders, and are almost always made out of brick, stone or tile. This connects seamlessly to the flue and chimney in your home as one element. Factory built fireplaces are a metal box, sometimes made with or without refractory bricks inside to be framed into a house without masonry. They are usually installed in framed walls and encased in non-combustible materials while the home is being built. Nowadays, a lot of new homes have gas fireplaces, but the standard for older homes is usually wood burning. You can get a fireplace after your home has been built; it just requires a little bit of a renovation. A cavity will have to be created and venting allowed for, either by installing a chimney or applicable venting.

A fireplace insert is inserted into an existing masonry fireplace; just like a stove can be. If you have a masonry fireplace that needs a facelift, an insert is there to fill the gap and rejuvenate your room. This means that it will exclusively take the place of your masonry fireplace, by connecting the insert to the chimney and flue leading outside. Sure this looks very similar to a fireplace, but it is definitely not the same thing. While you may not see the difference at first glance, there are many styles that make inserts and mason fireplace look very similar. Inserts are a low cost option compared to a complete renovation to install a gas fireplace, or completely replace your existing masonry fireplace. This is yet another reason why Inserts are so versatile. A fashionable choice, inserts can change the ambience of a room to whatever you desire.

Efficiency

Gas fireplace inserts are installed as a sealed system with a glass door. As a sealed system, no air from inside the home will escape through the fireplace or chimney, making this fireplace option more energy efficient. A gas insert also features a blower that pushes warm air into the room for more powerful heating, as opposed to just radiating heat out naturally. As a result, gas inserts are much more efficient heaters than gas log sets, with efficiency rated between 70%-85%.

How many BTU's?

A gas fireplace's heat output, in BTU's, should match your room size, climate, and your house's insulation level.

Do Gas Inserts need electricity?

No. Rather than requiring electricity, gas stoves and fireplaces generate their own electricity. This is accomplished with a thermopile that is integrated into the pilot light. This thermopile creates millivolts of electricity that are used to open and close the gas valve.

Maintenance

An annual inspection of your gas fireplace is required for safety, efficiency and insurance purposes. Lack of maintenance will void any insurance claim or warranty associated with the unit. For about \$225, we will come once a year to clean and inspect the unit, ensuring that you have a safe, efficient burning experience.

Can I convert from a Wood Insert to a Gas Insert?

Yes. But the venting that is required is different. **GAS CANNOT BE VENTED OUT OF A WOOD LINER AND VICE VERSA.** The proper liner must be installed according to code and the manufacturer's instructions. This is an added cost.

Benefits

- You don't have to split, stack, season, or haul logs.
- Gas fireplace inserts can be used in masonry or prefab fireplaces. They can be vented through the existing chimney (or a wall for a free-standing unit).
- There are no ashes to bag, no smoky smells.
- There's a definite green factor — they burn with a 65% to 99% efficiency rating, which means very little pollution or smoke.
- You can start, adjust, and snuff out fires with the touch of a remote control.

- The fire needs no tending and won't die out from neglect.
- A remote control or wall thermostat can control the flame size—and therefore heat output—to maintain a specific temperature setting in the room.
- You can get as much as 75 to 99 percent of a fuel's energy back as heat.
- Variable-flame height adjustment. Allows you to dial in just the amount of heat you need, from a whisper of a flame to a roaring fire. (The best units adjust down to 30 percent of full output).
- Electronic ignition. Eliminates the need for a pilot light, saving up to \$10 a month in fuel.
- LED accent lighting. Adds a realistic flickering effect inside the firebox.
- Built-in fan. Pulls indoor air into the space behind the firebox and pumps hot air out, heating a room in a hurry.
- Battery backup available by request. Ensures the fireplace will light during a power outage.
- There are Log alternatives:

Glass: A sparkling bed of tempered glass chips fits nicely in a modern fireplace.



Coal: These black ceramic lumps generate a rosy glow reminiscent of the coal burned in Victorian-era parlors.



Stone: Calico-colored ceramic rocks have a rustic feel that would fit right in the country home.



Natural gas or propane?

Gas fireplaces can burn either type. Natural gas is less expensive and produces about 5 percent more heat. Choose propane where natural gas isn't available.

DIY or hire a pro?

For the safest, most efficient, code-approved and best-looking installation, leave the work to the professionals. When installing any unit, there are very specific building code requirements. But especially regarding the liner to the unit. It's necessary that we install an appropriately determined liner to ensure that the chimney's draft satisfies all code and insurance specifications, and that the new unit functions safely. A liner that is sized and gauged incorrectly can cause drafting, result in excess creosote deposits, inefficient performance which leads to fire. A sound liner is not only mandatory, but TRULY a matter of safety. Also, your insurance company will NOT cover any damage if the installation was not done by or inspected by a CHIMNEY professional. (Not a building code inspector).

Cost

Every home and project is different. It all depends on the state of your existing chimney, the work that needs to be performed, your heating needs and the unit you select. We have to schedule a time come to your home to give you a FREE In-Home Consultation. We will then provide you with a Quote. We do our absolute best to stay within your budget and get you the end result you desire.